

Minutes of Uintah Basin Regional Council meeting held on July 13 at Uintah Canyon Power Plant

Council Members and Guests Attending: Mark Raymond, Paul Nielson, Tammie Lucero, Dan Wheeler, Bill Johnson, Guy Denton, Curtis Dastrup, Keith Sprouse, Irene Hansen, Yankton Johnson, Judy Chambley, Anne MacKiewicz, Wayne Griffin, Randall Bennett, Greg Todd, Mark Holmes, Jill Goodman, Beverly Evans, Shirley Weathers, Sharon Walters, Stewart Leith, Brian Raymond, Randy Deets

Staff: JoJo Gale, Kelly Thornton, Shelly Ivie, Toni Ansel, Kathy Deets, Margo Weeks, Bob Gilbert,

Mark welcomed everyone. Minutes were reviewed and approved with two changes: Brain Raymond should have read 'Brian Raymond', and Mark suggested that the term 'getting shafted' be revised to "didn't get what we wanted".

Mark then introduced Paul Nielson as the new chair, who will serve for the next two years according to statute. Mark also recognized Ron Tollefson who has been serving as the youth council chair and Paul who has been serving as chair of the Duchesne Co. Employers Committee. Lana Carroll has also served as chair of the Vernal Employers Committee until just recently, when due to work requirements, felt it best to resign the chair. Mark expressed appreciation to all the Committees and the members and the work they do. He felt that staff at DWS do a great job, and recounted his experience at the National Workforce Board meeting when New York City expressed pride at getting its first one-stop center. Utah has nearly 40.

Paul then asked if the Council could develop some ideas/projects to work on for the coming year. The following were suggested:

1. Be involved in the development of the state energy plan
2. Council involvement in developing additional worksites for FEP customers and youth
3. Additional focus on apprenticeships. Involve education community partners, employers (seminars by JoJo), utilize available grants, possible Custom Fit funds.
4. Support for USU/UBATC technical programs, that, when coupled with USU general education programs, will lead to a transferable associates degree.
5. Council assist in and develop support for Four year Nursing Program at USU
6. Continue development and support for health care careers. Continue giving youth healthcare opportunities via internships, tours, etc.

7. Improve understanding of council members and employers on available community programs; i.e. energy and healthcare
8. Work for USU/UBATC Building in Vernal
9. Support the Tele/Health initiative
10. Opportunities for enrichment/learning environment for 0-3 year olds. Children need quality daycare centers.
11. Quality child care. USU would like a full-time faculty position for Family & Human Development
12. Lack of Workforce – Immediate Need. Form a task force. Possibly research what other areas have done when faced with similar issues
13. Shortage of Housing
14. Need accurate data to reflect change in workforce, population, etc. in the Basin. Need good data for grants. Maybe leverage some of severance tax to develop accurate numbers.
15. More services for Daggett County.

Paul said the Executive Committee would meet and review the list, then assign topics to the Committees, where they could prioritize and select the most fitting items for action.

Dan then provided the Committee report for Operations and Planning. He said the committee recently met, and invited specialists from DWS to talk about the worker shortage, current employment data, affordable housing, and some possible funding sources to address the concerns. The Committee also developed a list of programs in the Basin that need developing or strengthening.

Randall, new chair for the Duchesne Co. Employers Committee, reported for the Committee, saying to ‘never miss a meeting’ as that is when one might get elected. He said the Unemployment Seminar on June 1<sup>st</sup> was well received and that the presenter was approachable and knowledgeable. The Committee is looking at another seminar for September.

Bill Johnson, Vernal Employers Committee Chair, said that the economy in Uintah County is still quite strong, with over 240 openings at the Vernal DWS Office. Many businesses have ‘help wanted’ signs out. He said the Council’s recent involvement in the USU Business program was very useful. In last month’s meeting, Reta Campbell, who does a senior worker program for the Forest Service, said that many seniors were going to work in the oil field, and she is having a harder time finding candidates. Bill

said that the Business Symposium is scheduled for August 30 at Western Park, with Mark Eaton, a business owner and former Utah Jazz center, being the keynote speaker.

Wayne said the Youth Council continues to meet regularly. It honors successful youth in different youth programs. Ron Tollefson has retired as chair, and Jill Goodman is the new Chair. The next meeting is August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Randall was asked to give a status report of the current LPN/RN nursing program. He said that Weber State has committed to providing an RN program each year, but there have been some changes at Weber State and those who made the commitment are no longer in those positions. He said we need to watch and monitor the situation. Dr. Denton said that USU is pursuing the four year nursing degree – is one of the 5 developmental programs he included in plans for the Uintah Basin campus. He would like to meet with a smaller group that includes hospitals, counties and community leaders. JoJo said she appreciated the excellent cooperation from the Ashley Valley Medical Center in working with high school students that are considering medical careers. Toni said ditto for Uintah Basin Medical Center.

Anne Mackiewicz, Eastern Region Childcare Referral and Resource Director, said we need to promote good child care facilities. Price should not be the only consideration. Parents should look for centers that engage children in activities, not just watching videos. Dr. Denton said he would like to get a full-time faculty position to run a child care/family development program at USU.

Discussion then turned to the workforce shortage and the housing shortage. Bill said there is not good data for the Basin to reflect its recent upswing in jobs and wages. Suggested that funding and programs be sought that could develop some updated demographics for the Basin. A motion was made by Mark Raymond to create a task force to address these issues. Irene seconded. The voting was unanimous to move forward. Names for task force involvement are: Sharon, Irene, Bill, Yankton, Curtis, Greg, Judy, Dave Woolstenhulme, Dan W., Senator Evans.

Brian Raymond then presented a proposal that the Council sponsor a task force that would, in concert with the Southeast Council, look at implementing recommendations to improve the entrepreneurial climate and programs in our counties. Mark seconded the motion. All approved. Irene said that entrepreneurship is a top priority for the Governor and Lt. Governor's agenda, and this task force would be in a good position to contribute. Members to be involved are Mark Raymond, Mark Holmes, Irene, Brian, Yankton, and any others that would be interested.

Bill reported for Commissioner Haslem that the Vernal BLM Resource Management Plan is still in process of internal review.

Keith Sprouse and Dr. Denton then provided an update of the proposed Vernal USU/UBATC Building. Keith said there has been contact with the Division of Facilities and Construction Management about cost and space. A separate space study and cost

estimate were recently completed, with the new cost at \$12.5 million, which also includes an additional 5000 square feet. Keith said they had felt that the building estimates were too high, and this new study verified that. With the county's contribution of \$2.5 million, the cost would be at \$10 million. Senator Evans said that the effort is moving forward, as key legislative leaders and the Governor have been out to visit and now understand better the needs of our counties, and the contribution of the oil and gas industries. She is also working with the Utah College of Applied Technology President to build support.

Irene and Bill then gave a report on the Governor's visit to the Uintah Basin. Irene said it may be the first time in Utah's history that a Governor and 20 of his staff boarded a bus and visited an area of the state. The group went to Starvation Reservoir to learn about the Central Utah Project, Newfield Exploration to learn about oil and gas development, and Uintah Machine shop to see a successful small business. In Uintah County, the group went to see the tar sands facility, oil shale retort, the Bonanza power plant, an oil rig, and the gilsonite operations. They also went to the Dinosaurland Rodeo on Friday nite. Five businesses came and shared information with the Governor: Hatch River expeditions, Bloommaster, Uintah Engineering, Hallilburton and Split Mountain Garden Center. Both Irene and Bill felt the trip went very well, and the Governor better understands our industries and need for infrastructure.

Senator Evans thanked all those who helped with the trip. She said it was a very ambitious agenda and showed a great job of coordination.

Judy then provided the Regional Director's report. She reviewed some of the performance measures, saying that the Department finished in the top 6 states for food stamp accuracy and will get \$550,000 in enhanced funding. She hopes the money can be passed on to staff for their excellent work. The job seeker survey for 2005 was also reviewed. Eastern Region was tops in the state with an average of 4.4 out of 5. The annual DWS employee survey showed that Eastern Region workers had an overall satisfaction rate of 4.0 out of 5, which again was the highest in the state. Judy commended the management and staff for these good results.

Toni said the Roosevelt Office is working to serve more youth that have dropped out of school. Services include skills training, on-the-job training or internships. Margo reported that the Vernal Office is again advertising job listings in the Nickel Ads, which are quite effective. There are now over 240 jobs listed in the Vernal DWS Office. She noted that Marilyn Wallis, Vernal Office Business Consultant, received the Outstanding Public Service award from the Vernal Chamber.

The next meeting is set for October 14 at the annual Council of Councils at the Provo Marriott.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.